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New K.G.B. Chief Named by Moscow

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MOSCOW, May 26 — Yuri V. Andropov stepped down today as head of the K.G.B., the Soviet intelligence and internal-security organization, two days after being appointed to a senior position in the Communist Party secretariat.

A brief announcement by Tass, the Soviet press agency, said the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, the nominal Parliament, had "relieved" Mr. Andropov as chairman of the K.G.B. "in connection with his assignment to other duties."

Western analysts here believed that Mr. Andropov's departure from the powerful intelligence bureaucracy after 15 years as its head improved his position as a successor to Leonid I. Brezhnev, the Soviet leader. The analysts had considered it unlikely that he would be allowed to continue as K.G.B. chairman because of the broad powers that would be concentrated in his hands if he did.

Vitali V. Fedorchuk, a 64-year-old lifelong K.G.B. officer who has led the Ukrainian branch of the secret service since 1970, was appointed to succeed Mr. Andropov as the agency's chief. Mr. Fedorchuk has held no national office before, and his most recent writings, with warnings of ideological subversion from Poland, imperialists, "international Zionism" and "clerical anti-Communism," suggest that he is a hard-line, uncompromising professional secret service official.

Mr. Andropov's departure from the K.G.B., whose Russian initials stand for Committee for State Security, came as little surprise to Western and Soviet analysts who have been monitoring the political maneuvering in the top Soviet leadership since the death of Mikhail A. Suslov last January left vacant the powerful position of chief ideologist.

Reputation for Competence

Two days ago, Mr. Andropov was named as one of the 10 permanent secretaries of the Central Committee. Although his specific duties were not announced, some analysts presumed that he would take over at least one of Mr. Suslov's responsibilities, which included control over ideology as well as all Soviet communications organizations.

At 67 years old, with a reputation for competence and a background in foreign affairs and party work in addition to the K.G.B., Mr. Andropov is often put forth as one of the foremost contenders to succeed Mr. Brezhnev.

But while Mr. Andropov appears to have improved his political position, the analysts stressed that there has been no tangible sign of any diminution in Mr. Brezhnev's control, or of any setback to the standing of Konstantin U. Chernenko, the Soviet leader's assistant on the Politburo. Mr. Chernenko, who by dint of his close association with Mr. Brezhnev is certain to figure in any succession struggle, has remained prominent and has laid his own claim to ideological leadership in several recent pronouncements.

The appointment of Mr. Fedorchuk to succeed Mr. Andropov breaks a long tradition of naming career party officials to head the security apparatus. A Ukrainian, Mr. Fedorchuk has apparently spent his entire career in the Ukrainian branch of the K.G.B., which he joined in 1939 at the age of 21. He holds the rank of colonel-general in the security service, and is listed as a member of the Politburo.

No Tolerance for Deviation

Last year, Mr. Fedorchuk contributed an article to a Ukrainian-language ideological journal warning against "ideological sabotage" by the West, and focusing on the purported threat from Poland. The article followed a standard Soviet hard-line, demonstrating no tolerance for any deviation from the narrow Communist path and invariably tracing these to Western or other outside "enemies of socialism."

Mr. Fedorchuk attacked Poland as a prime "arena for active subversion by forces hostile to the socialist system," suggesting that the popular movement in the Ukraine's Western neighbor had alarmed the local K.G.B. But he also presented a catalogue of other subversive activities aimed at the "spiritual decomposition" of the Soviet masses, especially those "insufficiently hardened ideologically and politically, infected by nationalist prejudices and religious intoxicants, or quite simply morally corrupted."

Mr. Fedorchuk's main culprit is the United States, but he also attacks

"Ukrainian bourgeois nationalists" — a standard formula for Ukrainian émigrés — as well as "international Zionism" and "clerical anti-Communism."

The two-line Tass announcement of Mr. Fedorchuk's appointment offered no hint as to the reasons why the Kremlin decided to place the awesome machinery of the K.G.B. in the hands of a career officer. The tendency in Moscow has been to guarantee the "leading role" of the Communist Party by placing party careerists at the helm of powerful agencies.

There was some speculation among Western diplomats that the Politburo had been reluctant to give any of its own members control over the K.G.B., and preferred to bring in a politically impotent professional unlikely to endanger the delicate balance of powers at the top. There was also the possibility that the aging leaders, aware that a succession struggle may soon begin and wary of the mood of their country and deteriorating international relations, had decided to bring in a no-nonsense veteran.

A political outsider, especially a non-Russian, was also less likely to involve the K.G.B. in any political succession fight.

Ideological Vigilance Urged

Mr. Fedorchuk was chosen for the K.G.B. leadership over a number of veteran deputies, including two — Georgi K. Tsinev and Viktor M. Chebrikov — who have advanced since the death in January of Semyon K. Tsvigun, first deputy to Mr. Andropov.

Top K.G.B. leaders have appeared with increased frequency in the national press, usually to express alarm over the East-West ideological confrontation and to press for greater ideological vigilance. Some of the concern has evidently been prompted by the events in Poland, but much also seems related to the emergence of new Western-oriented or religious trends among youth and the waning of ideological orthodoxy, which the K.G.B. careerists largely attribute to foreign subversion.

Mr. Fedorchuk's adherence to these views makes it most unlikely that the security apparatus will undergo any significant change in orientation or methods under his leadership.